

## My Favorite Golf Foursome

There is the most friendly, unassuming, cheerful and absolutely classy group of golfers that make up what I call my favorite foursome. I don't know them very well, I only know they love the game of golf, have a deep respect for each other, seem to be lifelong



**Photo 1 Left to Right: Gene Phelps, Ron Fox, Walt Douglas, Bob Erickson (Not Pictured: Walt Harrison) One member rotates out of the group to keep a foursome intact**

buddies, and love the United States of America. They are the living image of the gentleman's gentleman. They are the best of customers. A round of golf from them rarely last over 3 ½ hours, unless there is a slow group ahead of them.

These men don't complain though they don't accept second-rate standards either. They are all any young adult should ever want to be:

honest, brave, cheerful, industrious, hard working, and filled with integrity beyond reproach. They are also quiet, unassuming, and thankful for every day and every ray of sunshine that allows them to

play the wonderful game of golf; But I don't know these men.



**Photo 2 Ron Fox's B-24 Liberator. The plane was shot down over Berlin and they managed to land in Sweden**

I only know things I have heard about them, and what I have read about their deeds. I don't know what it's like to spend time in a German World War II POW camp. I don't know what it's like to go on numerous bombing runs over enemy territory, getting shot at



**Photo 3 Walt Douglas in front of his P-51 Mustang**

on every one and having holes blown through the aircraft I'm flying. I don't know what it's like to have my aircraft shot down. I don't know what it's like to crash land after taking numerous shells through the aircraft I'm piloting. I don't know what it's like to have my friends get blown away on the field of battle and to never see them again. I

don't know the fear and worry that could consume a

soul when thinking they may never see their families and loved ones again. I don't know the agony and the misery of

war as it was felt in WW-II and the Korean Conflict. They



**Photo 5 One of the "Golden Boy's" planes takes a shell through the wing**



**Photo 4 Bob Erickson - ready for a mission**

do.

These are the real heroes of America. Every time I hear of an athlete or movie actor being called a hero, I smile and think of the people like my favorite foursome. They gave up more than a shoe contract. They sacrificed a

lot and were willing to sacrifice all. Not only did they win wars, they built the United States of America into the greatest industrial and military power on the face of the earth. They also have the compassion to be sure our country does the right thing too. They know it's not about power: it's about how power is used. They have an air of camaraderie about them that I have never seen in any other organization.

My favorite foursome could throw their weight around - they are all retired Colonels – but they don't. They could ask for special treatment, but they never have and never would. They are content to enjoy life, enjoy golf, and most importantly, each other's company. They'll finish the round, shooting a score near their ages (with one of them constantly below his) and enjoy a little time with each other before heading home. Looking at them, you would never know the fierce battles they went through when they were active duty military officers.

If golf is a game of camaraderie and integrity, then my favorite foursome is about as good as golf gets. If true heroism is based on willingness to sacrifice and place others ahead



**Photo 6 Ron Fox during WW-II**



**Photo 7 Walt Harrison with his F-100.  
Walt flew the F-100 in Korea and  
Vietnam**

of self, while in the face of terror and the threat of certain harm or death, then my favorite foursome fills that bill too.

If I am lucky, I will see them again very soon. Their enthusiasm for life and cheerfulness simply makes me feel good. They are an example of what is right with America and they make me proud to be associated with Luke Air Force Base since they have given me a chance to serve them a little.



**Photo 8 Ron Fox receives a medal from Gen George Brown**

They are part of the reason we have Air Force Golf – to provide a wholesome atmosphere where we can enjoy friendship and camaraderie.

They call themselves the Golden Boys. They have been written about as being “The Greatest Generation”. To me, they are simply My Favorite Golf Foursome.